

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - March 3, 2004

Attorney General John Ashcroft and United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that Muhamed Abid Afridi and Ilyas Ali pled guilty today in federal court in San Diego to the felony charges of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and conspiracy to distribute heroin and hashish. The defendants appeared before United States District Court Judge M. James Lorenz and entered guilty pleas to counts one and three of the three-count indictment filed on October 30, 2002.

In connection with the pleas, both defendants admitted that they conspired to distribute approximately five metric tons of hashish and 600 kilograms of heroin originating in Pakistan to undercover United States law enforcement officers. Additionally, the defendants admitted that they conspired to receive, as partial payment for the drugs, four "Stinger" anti-aircraft missiles which they intended to then sell to the Taliban, an organization they knew at the time to be the same as Al-Qaeda.

Attorney General John Ashcroft stated, "Terrorism and drug trafficking thrive in the same conditions, support each other, and feed off each other. These guilty pleas are reminders that the Al-Qaeda terrorist

network continues to use any and all illicit means to finance, plan and perpetrate their acts of violence. While this case highlights the ongoing, transnational threats of terrorism, it also shows that law enforcement agencies around the world are focused and cooperating in combating terrorist activity. Because of the actions taken in this investigation, America is safer and our citizens are more secure. I commend the work of U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of California, Carol Lam, and her staff and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I also thank the Hong Kong Police Department for their assistance in this case.”

The defendants are scheduled to appear before Judge Lorenz for a sentencing hearing at the United States Courthouse in San Diego on June 29, 2004, at 8:30 a.m.

DEFENDANTS

Muhammed Abid Afridi

Ilyas Ali

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

- Count 1: Title 21, United States Code, Sections 841(a) and 846 - Conspiracy to distribute heroin and hashish
Penalties: Maximum life in prison, \$4,000,000.00 fine
- Count 3: Title 18, United States Code, Sections 2339B(a)(1) and (d) - Providing Material Support to Terrorists
Penalties: Maximum 15 years in prison, \$250,000.00 fine

AGENCY

Federal Bureau of Investigation